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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 27 November 1996 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I have the honour to enclose herewith the statement issued by the League of Arab States denouncing the measures taken by Israel to expand the settlements in the occupied Arab territories. Kindly inform the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council of this statement and also arrange for it to be distributed as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly under agenda items 33 and 35.

(Signed) Mahmoud ABOUL-NASR
Ambassador
Head of Mission
New York

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ANNEX

Statement issued on 24 November 1996 by the Secretariat of the League of Arab States denouncing the measures taken by Israel to expand the settlements in the occupied Arab territories

The Secretariat of the League of Arab States is following with grave concern the decision of the Israeli Government to expand the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, occupied Arab Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights. It reaffirms that the measures taken by the Israeli Government to that end contribute to the tension in the region and generate an increase in acts of violence, in addition to the fact that those practices are causing a loss of confidence in the sincerity of the Israeli Government in moving forward in the peace process, and threaten to undermine that process.

The Secretariat of the League of Arab States, in denouncing those measures, holds the Israeli Government fully responsible for the outcome of its practices, which are incompatible with the rules and principles of international law, the decisions of international legitimacy and the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. It reaffirms that the continuation by the Israeli Government of those practices, and the acts of repression, terrorism and torture committed by it against citizens in the occupied Arab territories, will merely result in the creation of a thick wall of mistrust, compounded by the Israeli court's latest decision that Israeli interrogators are permitted to continue their bodily torture of Palestinian detainees. The Secretariat considers this decision to be a flagrant violation of the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the spirit of the current peace process in the region.

The Secretariat of the League of Arab States calls upon the States involved in the peace process in the Middle East, and in particular the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the States members of the European Union, to move speedily and effectively to maintain the momentum achieved in the peace process and to compel Israel to abide by the provisions of international law and the decisions of international legitimacy, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 252 (1968), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the principle of land for peace, with a view to transforming the Middle East into a region of peace, security and stability.